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ABSTRACT

School-age child care (SACC) programs based on-site in Virginia elementary schools were surveyed to determine the scope of such programs across the commonwealth, and to look more comprehensively at existing programs in terms of operators, activities, affordability, and other issues. In January 1993, the survey was sent to school superintendents in each school district in Virginia, and was aimed at those programs providing specifically or exclusively for school-aged children in elementary schools. Survey findings indicated that Virginia is moving forward in the area of providing care for school-aged children, and many school districts and elementary schools are working to help solve the problems associated with unsupervised children. Results provide a profile of school-based SACC programs and their activities, which include free-choice activities, sports, and homework help. (Appendices include the survey instrument, a listing of survey respondents reporting no SACC, the number of schools reporting no SACC listed by locality, and the number of schools offering SACC and the total number of SACC programs, listed by locality.) (AS)

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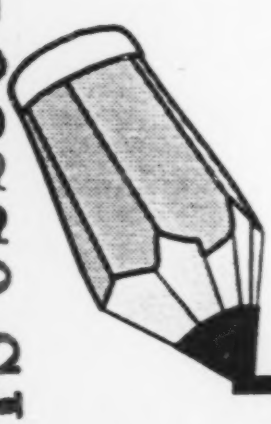
School-Age Child Care In Virginia

1993 Survey Results

Virginia Council on Child Day Care
and Early Childhood Programs



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School Age Child Care in Virginia

1993 Survey Results

Background

The focus of this survey was on school-age child care programs based on campus in public elementary schools, and had two objectives. The first was to determine the scope of such programs across the Commonwealth; and the second was to look more comprehensively at existing programs in terms of program operators, activities, affordability, and other issues.

In January 1993, a survey was sent to school superintendents in each school district in Virginia. Surveys were not sent to many other groups that provide school-age child care such as child care centers, youth serving organizations, or family day care homes--all major providers of child care for elementary-aged children. The survey was aimed at those programs providing specifically or exclusively for school-aged children and housed in elementary schools.

The findings clearly indicate that Virginia is moving forward in the area of providing care for school-aged children. Many school districts and elementary schools are making the commitment to help solve the problems associated with unsupervised children.

This year, Virginia took a step forward with passage of Senate Bill SB-533. It authorizes school boards to operate child care programs without first being required to obtain specific legislative permission to do so.

We are grateful to all the individuals who took time to complete the survey. We especially appreciate their initiative in providing the data for each elementary school, a tedious and time-consuming process. We hope the information will be useful to local communities and others interested in school-age child care. Should there be comments, questions, or a need for further information, contact:

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I. Overview, Methodology and Survey Instrument

In January 1993, survey questionnaires were prepared by the Council on Child Day Care and Early Childhood Programs and mailed to the superintendent of each local school district (134) in the Commonwealth. The survey instrument was accompanied by a cover letter jointly signed by the Superintendent of the Virginia Department of Education and the Director of the Council.

A total of 118 completed surveys were returned which represents a response rate of 88% (118/134). The survey instrument is attached as Appendix A of this document.

The survey instrument included a definition of school-age child care (hereafter referred to as SACC). It was defined as care provided, on a daily basis, to elementary school children (enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade) in their out-of-school hours. Information was sought only for those programs housed or situated in school facilities.

The first section (questions 1 to 4) was designed to differentiate between those school districts providing on-site SACC from those providing none. School districts providing no on-site SACC were asked to indicate the reasons in question four. Those replying affirmatively were asked to provide detailed information about the SACC program for each affected elementary school in the second section. The second section of the survey instrument then collected the data for each school.

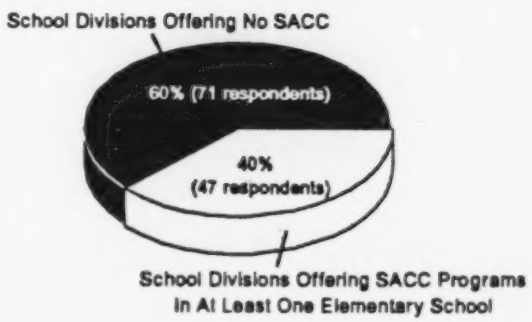
II. Findings and Analysis

School Divisions Offering No SACC

Of all responding school divisions, seventy-one (60%) offer no on-site or campus based SACC (refer to Figure 1). The overwhelming majority of these school divisions represent rural counties. Two exceptions are the cities of Chesapeake (26 elementary schools/17,980 elementary school students) and Richmond (30 elementary schools/15,398 elementary school students).

A listing of responding localities reporting no on-site school age child care is included in Appendix B of this document. Inclusion in this list does not

Figure 1. School Divisions Offering No SACC vs. Divisions Offering at Least One SACC Program



necessarily mean that no school-age child care exists in these communities. Rather, no SACC was reported to be offered on-site in any elementary school.

If no SACC program was reported to be available in any of a school division's elementary schools, the respondent was asked to check as many of seven reasons as might apply to explain this fact (question 4). The most frequently cited reason (49%) for not having SACC programs on-campus was that school-age child care needs were being met off campus by organizations other than schools (refer to Figure 2). Financial barriers (41%) and no demonstrated need for such services (35%) were the next two most frequently mentioned reasons.

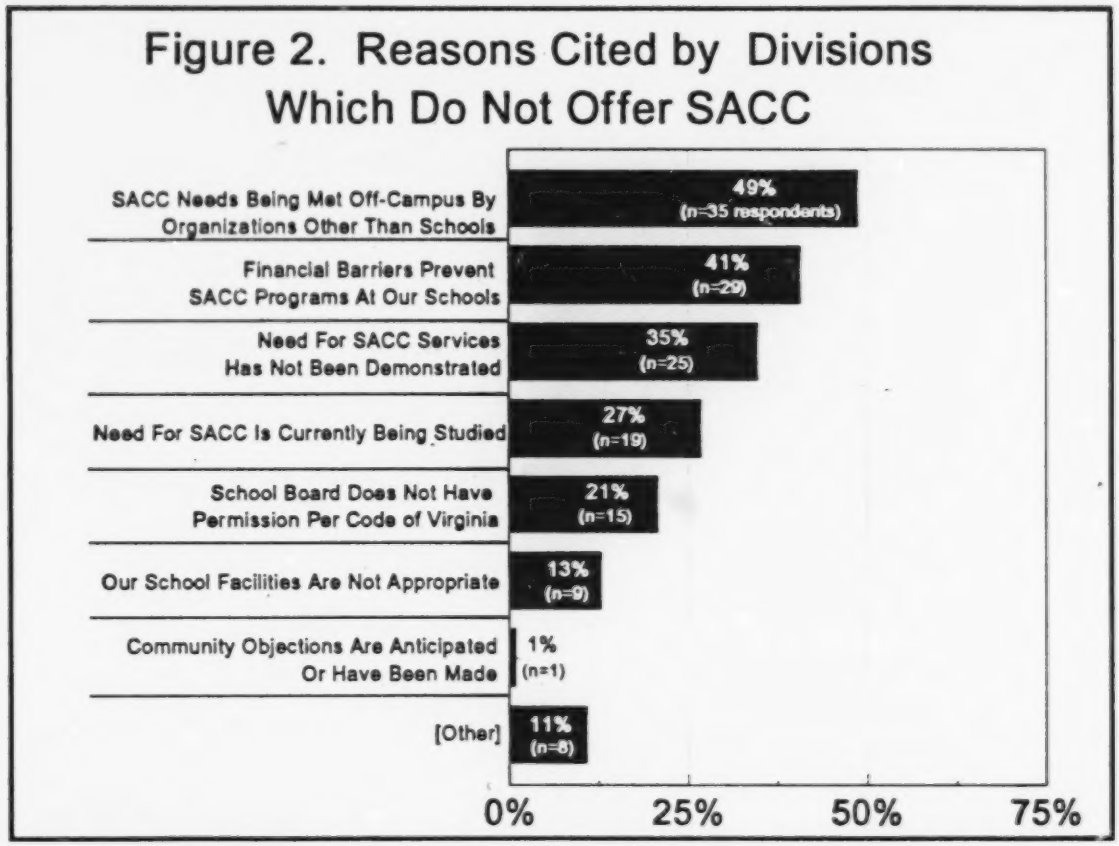


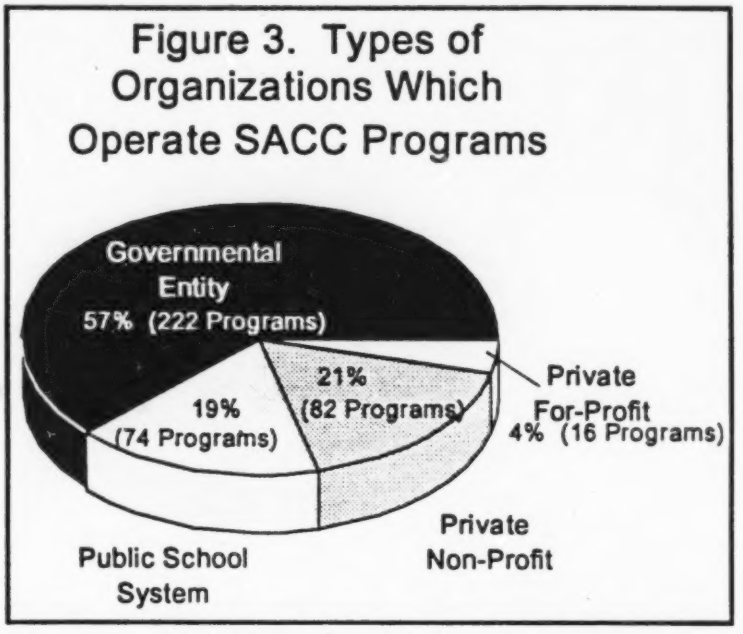
Figure 2. Reasons Cited by Divisions Which Do Not Offer SACC
SACC Needs Being Met Off-Campus By Organizations Other Than Schools
49% (n=35 respondents)
Financial Barriers Prevent SACC Programs At Our Schools
41% (n=29)
Need For SACC Services Has Not Been Demonstrated
35% (n=25)
Need For SACC Is Currently Being Studied
27% (n=19)
School Board Does Not Have Permission Per Code of Virginia
21% (n=15)
Our School Facilities Are Not Appropriate
13% (n=9)
Community Objections Are Anticipated Or Have Been Made
1% (n=1)
[Other]
11% (n=8)
0%
25%
50%
75%

Comments by respondents without any campus-based SACC to question four include the following. In one county (King George), an on-site SACC program established at the beginning of the 1992 school year was reported to have been discontinued due to lack of interest. However, four school divisions anticipate the start-up of a campus-based SACC program within the next year (Alleghany County, Frederick County, City of Buena Vista, and Isle of Wight County). Additionally, with the completion of a new school complex, Charles City County foresees establishing school-age child care within two to three years. While not based on-campus, the city of Galax notes that Galax Recreation Department operates before and after school programs, as well as a summer program, located immediately next door to its single elementary school.

III. Findings for Campus-Based SACC Programs

Forty-seven school divisions (40%) report that SACC is offered in at least one elementary school (refer to Figure 1). Of these, nine school divisions report SACC at each elementary school in their school division (Arlington, Culpeper, Charlottesville, Virginia Beach, Falls Church, Lexington, Powhatan County, Staunton, and Albemarle County).

Statewide, the number of elementary schools reported to house SACC programs on campus totaled 369. A few elementary schools house more than one on-campus SACC program so that the total number of programs exceed the number of schools slightly (369 schools and 394 proqrams). Refer to Appendix C for a listing of those school divisions offering on-campus school-age child care.



Few of the SACC programs housed in elementary schools (19%) are operated directly by local school divisions (refer to Figure 3). Governmental entities operate over half (57%); primarily city and county parks and recreation departments. One governmental entity, the Fairfax Office for Children, with 103 on-site SACC programs, is the largest single SACC operator in Virginia.

In addition to operators from the public sector, program operators from the private sector are also found on campus in Virginia's elementary schools. Youth-serving organizations representing YMCA's, YWCA's, and a few community action agencies constitute most of the private, non-profit sector operators. For-profit child care companies reported to offer on-campus SACC programs include Minnieland, Inc. (Prince William County), Child Care Consultants (Floyd, Giles, and Montgomery Counties) and Dawning Point (Fredericksburg).

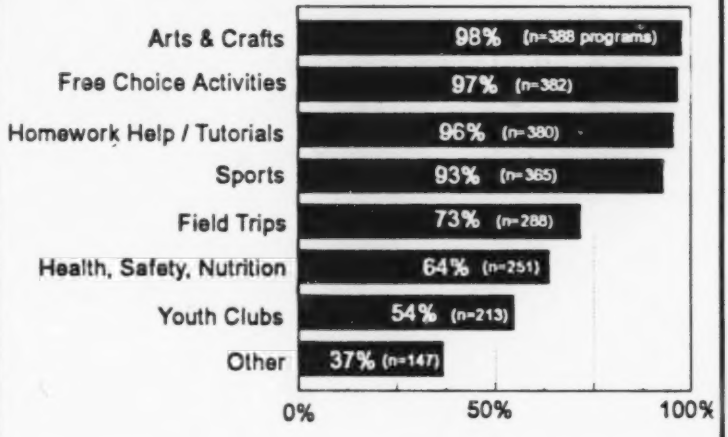
IV. A Profile of School Based SACC Programs

Two-thirds (66%) of the established SACC programs reported that these services were available during the school calendar year only. The remaining provide these services year-round.

In a few localities children were transported from unserved elementary schools to elementary schools with on-campus programs. Almost never was transportation from school to home mentioned as an available SACC service .

The survey requested data regarding the types of activities available for children during program hours. Four activities proved to be the most popular, being offered by over 90% of SACC programs: arts and crafts; free-choice activities; homework help/tutorials; and sports. This was true for all types of program operators -- both those operated by public entities and private child care providers. Field trips and health/safety/ nutrition related activities were also reported very frequently (refer to Figure 4). Youth club related activities were reported by more than half of respondents. Other activities reported by respondents include board games, cultural enrichment, music, drama, speakers, and computers.

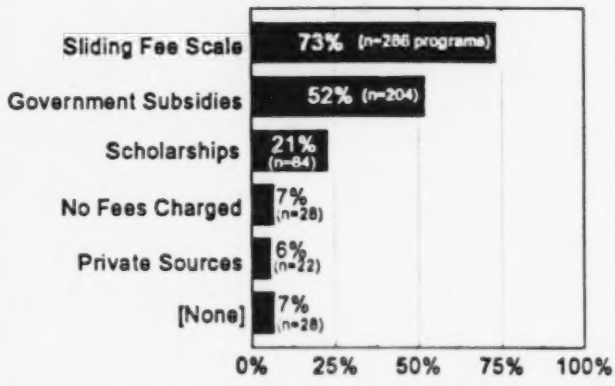
Figure 4. Percent of SACC Programs Offering Various Activities



Eligibility for enrollment in these programs is basically by age of the child and by the campus where the child attends school. The two most frequently cited criteria for eligibility to enroll in a SACC program were where the program was located (303 programs), and the age of the child (264 programs). Employment of the parents was an entry/enrollment factor mentioned by almost half (47%). It may be that some priority is given to the children of working parents. Three-quarters (286 programs) report that special needs children may be enrolled.

Regarding the affordability of school-based child care programs for parents, three-quarters (286 programs) reported utilizing a sliding fee scale (refer to Figure 5). Half (52%) reported governmental subsidies as a type of financial aid available to parents. This aid likely derives from local, federal, and state funds designated for child care for income-eligible families.

Figure 5. Percent of SACC Programs Offering Various Types of Financial Aid to Parents



Rarely were parents charged no fees. Rarely was financial aid available from private sources.

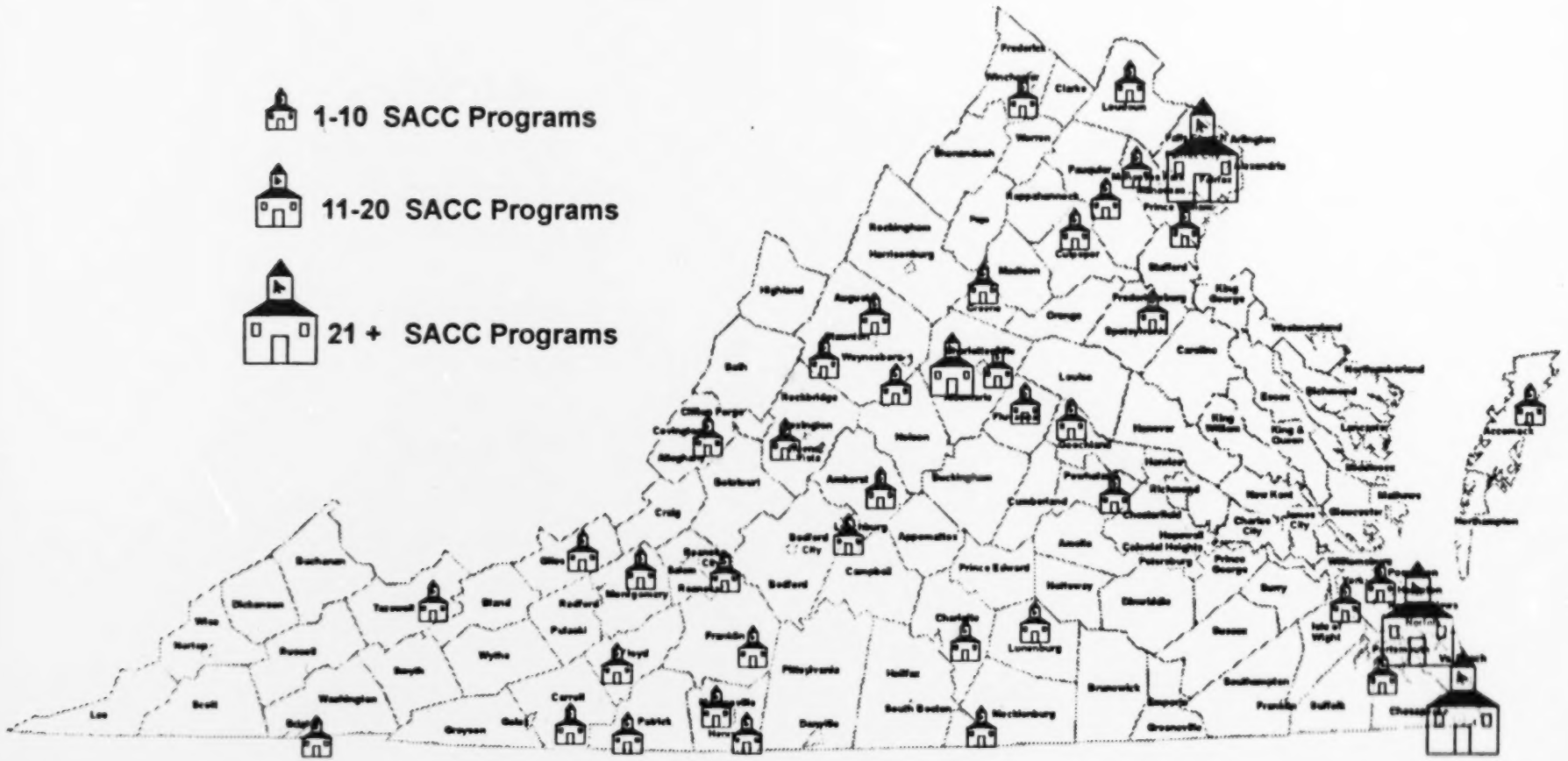
Forty-three percent (43%) of these programs offer before school services, with an average enrollment capacity of 36 children and average weekly fee of $19.90. Eighty percent (80%) of programs reported after school services with an average enrollment capacity of 57 children and an average weekly fee of $32.00. However, only twenty percent of programs reported offering both before and after school care. The average enrollment capacity for these programs was 45 children and the average weekly fee was $36.60. Roughly one-quarter (26%) of programs offered summer care. Summer care was slightly more expensive, averaging $49.00 per week, with an average enrollment capacity of 69 children.

V. The Geography of School-Age Child Care

The Council routinely monitors statistics regarding Virginia localities that have little or no licensed child care. The Virginia Department of Social Services supplied data to the Council showing that in April 1993, a total of 9 Virginia localities were without any type of licensed child care (Bath County, Buchanan County, Charles City County, the cities of Clifton Forge and Covington, Craig County, Highland County, New Kent County, and Page County). Most of these areas likewise report no on-site SACC programs in elementary schools.

Campus-based SACC programs in Virginia are concentrated in the urban areas of Northern Virginia and the Tidewater area. However, others are scattered throughout rural Virginia and in and around small cities (refer to Figure 6 -- next page). The map reveals few school-based programs in far Southwest, the Northern Neck, and Southside Virginia.

Figure 6. Respondents Indicating Their Divisions Offered SACC



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CONCLUSION

When eight-year old Macaulay Culkin is accidentally left "home alone" in the popular movie of the same name, the consequences are hilarious as he cleverly copes with two criminals intent on burglarizing his home. He confidently handles daily chores without the care or supervision of his parents as well.

For the 88,000 or so children in Virginia who are home alone regularly before and after school, during school holidays and summer vacation, the consequences are not so benign. In real "life" being "home alone" at a young age can be lonely, frightening, and unsafe.

We know that many young children are in self-care in Virginia. In 1988, a statewide survey randomly sampled parents of elementary school youngsters and youth professionals about children in self-care. It found many young children (about 12%) home alone for long periods daily. Some were also supervising much younger brothers and sisters.

We know that children of full-time working parents need care for a substantial amount of time outside of school hours. Annually, this amounts to almost 1000 hours yearly when they are not in school or with parents.

We know that, increasingly, both parents must work to support their families. Sixty percent of men who work also have wives who work. Eighty percent of women in the work force will become pregnant at some time. A changing social setting finds women at the head of many single-parent households; many impoverished.

We know that, in the absence of affordable, available child care, principals find children literally sitting on the front steps of the school building, waiting for the doors to open, when they arrive in the morning. Children are dropped off by parents who have to begin work or commute to work much earlier than the opening time of the elementary school.

We know that a recent national survey, sampling 144 counties across the country, found an estimated 50,000 programs serving 1.7 million children; almost half of them were in the South. The most common program locations were in child care centers, public schools, and religious institutions (*School Age Notes*, Vol. XIII, #8, April 1993).

In response to the above trends and scenarios, we know that school-age child care in Virginia is establishing itself as a necessary and desirable child care option, regardless of the setting in which it is provided.

Appendix A.
[Survey Instrument -- Page 1]

Name of School District: _____

Name & Title of Person Completing Survey: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Instructions: For the purpose of this survey, school-age child care (SACC) denotes the care provided, on a daily basis, to elementary age children (enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade) in their out-of-school hours. Such programs may operate daily before the school day begins, after school hours, or both before and after school. They may or may not operate during the summer, on school holidays and staff work days. They may be known as "extended day" or "enrichment programs." On site, school-age child care programs refer to those housed or situated in school facilities.

1. Number of elementary schools in your district _____.

2. Number of elementary school students in your district as of September, 1992 _____.

3. Is on-site, school-age child care available in at least one elementary school in your district?
   (Note: This refers to programs operated on campus by any organization, for example YMCA's, YWCA's, as well as those operated directly by the school system.)

   _____ No _____ Yes (If Yes, please supply the information requested on the reverse side of this page).

4. If on-site school-age child care is not available at any elementary schools in your district, please indicate why (check all that apply)
   - _____ the need for services has not been demonstrated
   - _____ the need for school-age child care is currently being studied
   - _____ these needs are being met off-campus by organizations other than schools
   - _____ financial barriers prevent school-age child care at our schools
   - _____ our school board does not have permission per Code of Virginia
   - _____ our school facilities are not appropriate
   - _____ community objections are anticipated or have been made
   - _____ other (please comment) _____

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Appendix A.
[Survey Instrument – Page 2]

Please supply the following information for all School-Age Child Care (SACC) programs operating on-site at elementary schools in your division.
Use one row for each on-site SACC program operator. If a school has more than one on-site SACC program operator, use a separate row for each operator.
Please photocopy this form as needed.
***** NOTE: FOR EACH QUESTION, ENTER ALL NUMBERS THAT APPLY *****

Enter the name of the elementary school.	Enter the name of the operator of the SACC program at the school site (providing care and supervision of the children on-site).	What type of organization is this operator? *1=private non-profit (e.g., Y's, Boys & Girls Club) 2=private for-profit organization 3=religious organiz. 4=public school system 5=governmental entity 6=other (list)*	What organization provides administrative oversight to the program? *1=school system 2=other (explain)*	For each program, please check (✓) if before school (BS), after school (AS), before-and-after school (B/A), or summer (Sum) care is offered. [Check all that apply]. Also indicate the weekly rate charged to parents ($/wk), and the enrollment capacity (Enroll) for each.	Program calendar: *1=school year only 2=year round 3=school holiday 4=staff work days*	What support services are offered? *1=transportation (school to home) 2=transportation (from unserved schools) 3=enrolling special needs children (i.e., disabled, handicapped) 4=other (list)*	Program activities: *1=arts & crafts 2=free choice activities 3=sports 4=homework help/ tutorials 5=field trips 6=health, safety, nutrition 7=youth clubs 8=other (list)*	What criteria are used for SACC program eligibility? *1=age 2=school attended 3=family income 4=parent employment status 5=special social / educational needs of child 6=other (list)*	Type of financial aid to parents: *1=sliding fee scale 2=scholarships 3=government subsidies 4=private sources 5=no fees charged 6=other (list) 7=none*
1.				☐ BS: $/wk ___ Enroll ___ ☐ AS: $/wk ___ Enroll ___ ☐ B/A: $/wk ___ Enroll ___ ☐ Sum: $/wk ___ Enroll ___					
2.				☐ BS: $/wk ___ Enroll ___ ☐ AS: $/wk ___ Enroll ___ ☐ B/A: $/wk ___ Enroll ___ ☐ Sum: $/wk ___ Enroll ___					
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8.				☐ BS: $/wk ___ Enroll ___ ☐ AS: $/wk ___ Enroll ___ ☐ B/A: $/wk ___ Enroll ___ ☐ Sum: $/wk ___ Enroll ___					

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Appendix B.

Survey respondents reporting no school age child care

Locality	Number of elementary schools	Number of elementary students
Alleghany Co.	6	2000
Amelia Co.	1	670
Appomattox Co.	2	1388
Bath Co.	2	535
Bedford Co.	13	4680
Bland Co.	2	604
Botetourt Co.	6	2617
Brunswick Co.	4	1648
Buchanan Co.	11	3348
Buckingham Co.	4	1349
Buena Vista City	2	600
Charles City Co.	2	452
Chesapeake City	26	17980
Colonial Beach	1	430
Colonial Heights City	3	1202
Craig Co.	1	409
Cumberland Co.	1	500
Dickenson Co.	5	1978
Dinwiddie Co.	5	1776
Essex Co.	1	627
Franklin City	2	1007
Frederick Co.	9	4189
Galax City	1	580
Gloucester Co.	5	3443
Grayson Co.	9	1144
Greensville Co.	4	1216
Halifax Co.	15	4021
Hanover Co.	11	6027
Harrisonburg City	3	2034
Highland Co.	1	204
Highland Co.	6	2000
Hopewell City	3	1470
Isle of Wight Co.	4	[illegible]
King George Co.	2	1185
King William Co.	2	1100

Locality	Number of elementary schools	Number of elementary students
Lancaster Co.	2	950
Lee Co.	9	2647
Louisa Co.	3	2114
Madison Co.	4	1165
Manassas City	5	3250
Mathews Co.	1	580
Middlesex Co.	2	600
New Kent Co.	2	1050
Northampton Co.	5	2508
Northumberland Co.	2	650
Norton City	1	500
Nottoway Co.	4	1538
Orange Co.	6	2430
Page Co.	5	2194
Pittsylvania Co.	11	4300
Prince Edward Co.	1	1300
Prince George Co.	7	2956
Radford City	2	760
Rappahannock Co.	1	642
Richmond Co.	1	766
Richmond City	(not reported)	(not reported)
Rockbridge Co.	5	1426
Rockingham Co.	13	4750
Salem City	4	1698
Scott Co.	9	2365
Shenandoah Co.	4	2447
Smyth Co.	7	2757
Spotsylvania Co.	11	6597
Stafford Co.	11	6760
Sussex Co.	3	952
Warren Co.	4	4838
Washington Co.	7	3175
West [illegible]	1	442
Westmoreland Co.	3	1205
Wise Co.	[illegible]	(not reported)
Wythe Co.	7	2662

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Appendix C.

Number of Schools Offering School Age Child Care (SACC) and Number of SACC Programs by Locality

	Number of Elementary Schools	Number of Schools Offering SACC
Accomack Co.	6	2
Albemarle Co.	15	15
Alexandria City	(not reported)	10
Amherst Co.	7	4
Arlington Co.	25	25
Augusta Co.	12	1
Bristol City	4	2
Carroll Co.	15	2
Charlotte Co.	4	1
Charlottesville City	7	7
Covington City	2	1
Culpeper Co.	5	5
Fairfax Co.	130	103
Falls Church City	2	2
Fauquier Co.	10	3
Floyd Co.	5	2
Fluvanna Co.	4	1
Franklin Co.	11	5
Fredericksburg City	1	1
Giles Co.	3	2
Goochland Co.	3	2
Greene Co.	2	1
Hampton City	24	11
Henry Co.	12	6
Lexington City	1	1
Loudon Co.	23	6
Lunenburg Co.	2	1
Lynchburg City	11	3
Manassas Park City	3	1
Martinsville City	4	2
Mecklenburg Co.	7	1
Montgomery Co.	12	1
Newport News City	25	16
Norfolk City	39	22
Patrick Co.	6	1
Poquoson City	2	1
Portsmouth	16	4
Powhatan Co.	1	1
Prince William Co.	39	10
Roanoke City	21	7
Roanoke Co.	17	6
Staunton City	4	4
Tazewell Co.	10	5
Va. Beach City	52	52
Waynesboro City	5	3
Winchester City	4	1
York Co	10	6
TOTAL	**623**	**369**